

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CG AO

SUBJ: PRESSURES ON MOBUTU TO WITHDRAW FROM POWER

1. OUR REPORTING SINCE THE SHABA INVASION HAS SHOWN A MARKED INCREASE IN POPULAR AND ELITE OPINION THAT MOBUTU MUST GO. IN ADDITION, THE AVOWED AIM OF THE INVADERS IS THE OVERTHROW OF MOBUTU AND, NOT UNSURPRISINGLY, NEARLY EVERY KNOWN OPP-OSITION LEADER OF GROUP HAS JOINED IN THE CALL FOR TOPPLING THE PRESIDENT. WE INITIALLY WERE IMPRESSED, HOWEVER, BY THE FACT THAT THE ONE GROUP OF REFORMIST MINISTERS AND EX-MINISTERS -- WHO HAD BROUGHT EFFECTIVE PRESSURE ON MOBUTU TO REMOVE BISENGIMANA AND TO RESTRUCTURE THE CABINET IN HTE DIRECTION OF A PRIME-MINISTER FORM OF GOVT -- BASICALLY RALLED AROUND THE PRESIDENT WHEN THE INVADERS FIRST STRUCK INTO SHABA.

2. THE OPINION OF THIS REFORM ELEMENT HAS CHANGED OVER THE LAST THREE WEEKS. NOW, ITS MEMBERS SEE THAT MOBUTU MUST, AT A MINIMUM, DECENTRALIZE THE OPERATIONS OF GOVT TO GIVE MORE AUTONOMY TO THE VARIOUS REGIONS AND TO TRIBAL LEADERS, IF HE IS TO SURVIVE. BUT KEY MEMBERS OF THE GROUP HAVE NOW GONE BEYOND THAT ANALYSIS. IN A WORD, THEY SAY THAT THE TIME HAS COME FOR MOBUTU TO WITHDRAW FROM THE DAILY EXERCISE OF POWER. THEY BELIEVE THAT HE MUST QUICKLY TURN OVER GOVT TO A PRIME MINISTER - NGUZA IS STILL THE CANDIDATE -- WHO COULD

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RALLY THE POPULATION, NEGOTIATE WITH THE INVADERS AND BEGIN TO PIECE BACK TOGETHER A VIABLE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STATE. THE ALTERNATIVE THEY SEE TO SUCH REFOMR IS THE VIOLENT OVERTHROW OF MOBUTU LEADING TO CHAOS AND ULTIMATE CONTROL BY THE MOST RADICAL ELEMENTS.

3. THE FOREGOING PITCH WAS MOST RECENTLY MADE MAR 29 BY ONE OF

THE LEADERS OF THE REFORM GROUP TO THE DCM. WE'VE HEARD IT BEFORE, BUT THE LATEST TWIST IS THAT PRES CARTER SHOULD SEND A REP OUT TO TELL MOBUTU THAT IT IS TIME TO PACK IT IN. THE DEPT MAY REST ASSURED THAT WE DID NOT ENCOURAGE OUR INTERLOCUTOR TO BELIEVE THAT ANY MEMBER OF THE USG WOULD BE PREPARED TO UNDERTAKE SUCH A ROLE. IN FACT, WE HAVE PERSISTENTLY MADE IT CLEAR TO ALL CRITICS OF THE REGIME THAT WE ARE NOT (NO LONGER) IN THE BUSINESS OF EFFECTING POLITICAL CHANGE IN SUCH A DIRECT MODE. ZAIRIANS HAVE A WAY, HOWEVER, OF CONTINUING TO BELIEVE THAT SOMEONE ELSE, NOTABLY THE AMERICANS, "WILL DO IT FOR THEM."

4. WE REPORT THE FOREGOING FOR SEVERAL REASONS:

- A. IT UNDERLINES THE DEGREE TO WHICH SENTIMENT FOR MOBUTU'S REMOVAL IS SURFACING IN ALL QUARTERS;
- B. IT POINTS OUT THAT, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE INVASION ITSELF, PRESSURES ON MOBUTU REMAIN IN THE FORM OF TALKS, TRACTS AND THE HOPE THAT "SOMEONE ELSE" WILL MAKE THE MOVE; AND
- C. IT SHOULD ENCOURAGE US TO ANALYZE MORE DEEPLY WHAT ALTERNATIVES THERE ARE TO MOBUTU'S LEADERSHIP.

5. IN THIS LAST CONNECTION, WE AGREE WITH THE BASIC ANALYSIS OF THE REFORMERS -- THAT UNLESS POLITICAL CHANGE IS EFFECTED QUICKLY AND RATIONALLY, IT IS LIKELY TO OCCUR UNDER CONDITIONS OF GREATER INSTABILITY, IF NOT CHAOS. SINCE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT THE OUTCOME OF CHAOS, THE MOST USEFUL THING WE CAN DO IS TO TRY TO LAY OUT THE BASIC REQUIREMENT OF RATIONAL AND ORDERLY CHANGE. AT A MINIMUM, THIS WOULD SEEM TO ENTAIL:

- (A) MOBUTU'S AGREEMENT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE DAILY EXERCISE OF POWER AND BASICALLY RETREAT TO HIS HOME TOWN OF GBADOLITE AS SECRET

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"HEAD OF STATE"; MORE LIKELY, IT WOULD REQUIRE HIS COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL;

- (B) THE REMOVAL OF MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDENT'S FAMILY AND THE OTHER MOST BLATANT PRACTITIONERS OF CORRUPTION FROM KEY POSITION IN THE ECONOMY, BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC;

(C) A CREDIBLE PRIME MINISTER OR OTHER CHIEF EXECUTIVE (PERHAPS AN INTERIM COUNCIL) WHERE INITIAL GOALS WOULD INCLUDE:

- (1) RECONCILIATION WITH THE KATANGAN GENDARMES, PEACE AND NORMALIZATION WITH ANGOLA;
- (2) POLITICAL REFORM TO INCLUDE IN GOVT A WIDE RANGE OF PERSONALITIES REPRESENTATIVE OF THE VARIOUS INTEREST GROUPS INCLUDING THE OPPOSITION;
- (3) CONTRL OF THE ARMY AND OTHER SECURITY FORCES;
- (4) ECONOMIC REFORM;
- (5) MAXIMUM SUPPORT FROM ABROAD, INCLUDING WESTERN AND AFRICAN FRIENDS.

6. WE DOUBT THAT MOBUTU WILL HIMSELF PRECIPITATE THE FOREGOING

SCENERIO. NOR WILL A REPRESENTATIVE OF A FOREIGN POWER SUGGEST IT
TO HIM. MOST CRITICAL FOR THE FUTURE, WE CALCULATE THAT THE
REFORMERS LACK THE GUTS TO MAKE A MOVE WHICH WOULD BEGIN THE PROCESS
OF ORDERLY CHANGE. THUS, TO BE TRUE TO THE ANALYSIS -- MORE
VIOLENT CHANGE WOULD SEEM TO BE IN THE CARDS. WE COME TO THIS
TENTATIVE CONCLUSION RELUCTANTLY AND HOPE THAT WE ARE WRONG,
BECAUSE ZAIRE'S AND OUR INTERESTS WOULD SUFFER DURING THE
INEVITABLE PERIOD OF INSTABILITY.
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